

Joint Capital Planning Committee
Town Room, February 8, 2018

Members present: Connie Kruger (Chair), Tamson Ely, Phoebe Hazzard, Bernie Kubiak, Alex Lefebvre, Andrew Steinberg, Eric Nakajima. Absent: Marylou Theilman
Staff Present: Claire McGinnis, Anthony Delaney, David Ziomek, Sean Hannon, David Burgess, Christine Brestrup, Holly Bowser

Meeting called to order at: 8:37 AM

Christine Brestrup, Planning Director

Downtown wayfinding signs: longstanding project, initial grant from the state, allocation from town meeting to develop a “family of signs” to help people navigate around the center of town. Design completed, BID will help pay for some of the signs, cost range is \$160,000 to \$180,000. Project may be split over two years if needed. Steinberg asks if there are downsides of dividing the cost over two years. Brestrup responds it will be less expensive in FY19 but risk possible increase to total project by splitting due to repeat admin and inflation. There is a plan of what signs could be installed first (welcome signs, arrival signs, six or eight other signs initially). Kruger suggests up to 50 signs may be put up, asks what the BID will do. BID will post a sign at the roundabout and one other. Steel signs are preferred versus painted metal, which are less expensive. Kruger notes that we’re talking about the appropriation, not about the design of the system.

Flood mapping: remapping of flood maps is underway. FEMA maps are from 1985, based on 1977 data, and are no longer useful. Consultant on the project is familiar with FEMA processes but there is a new methodology for determining flood plains now in use. Reworking the maps using the new method will allow use of the maps for the foreseeable future. Kruger asks if previous work will be used, told this is an update and will use much of the previous work. Question of imminent threat noted on application, there has been flooding in Amherst and it’s important that homeowners know if they need flood insurance. Steinberg asks if current methodology satisfy the state/federal requirements. Brestrup responds that it does meet requirements but the new methodology will be superior. Will give us more accurate information on the Fort River flood plain and the school’s location.

David Burgess, Assessor

Personal property listing and review: need to update software this years, repeat this listing (previous listing was 10 years ago). Will likely bring in new growth that will cover the cost of the listing at a minimum. Off year for DOR, will be done when they have to come in and certify the listing.

Review and list real estate at UMass: DOR wants review of exempt properties, particularly UMass. Again would hire a company to do the review in collaboration with the University. We do have an idea of what Amherst and Hampshire College are worth, the values are key to triggering accessibility requirements. Uncertain as to why this is not an UMass expense if it is to the advantage of the university. Insurance value and cost of construction are known.

Holly Bowser, Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) staff liaison

The thirteen projects listed have not been voted on by CPAC as of this meeting, so this is not a list of approved projects

Administration costs – annual request.

Amherst Dog Park Committee: requesting funds for reuse studies, grant application, preliminary work
Epstein Property purchase at corner of Bay Road, Rt. 116 – pond on property that is connected to existing conservation land.

Conservation due diligence: money for survey's appraisals.

Amherst Community Connections – rental vouchers and administration cost for three homeless individuals.

North Amherst library – improvement to basement bathroom.

Mill River Baseball Fields – funds to finish the rehab project on the baseball fields.

Community Land Trust – first time homebuyers, looking to split cost of new homeowners where the trust would own the property, give home owner a 99 year lease to live there. This would be two

North Amherst Community Farm – farmhouse preservation, roofing/siding for the historic house.

Amherst Muni affordable housing trust -- \$40 K for consultant to help identify properties to be developed as affordable housing.

Development support – asks to have funds transferred to them to allow the trust to act quickly should a property become available. Not targeted to one project at this point.

Amherst Historical Society – textiles inventory/preservation in their collection.

Amherst Historical Society – new boiler.

Mill River Basketball Courts – rehabilitation of the existing basketball courts, repairs are underway, this will complete the work.

Funds: estimates at present \$930K from taxation, state match estimate \$160,000. Reserve for community housing -- \$375,000 set aside. \$1.6 million available, deficit of about \$112,000 based on value of requests.

Kruger notes attempts to bring the CPAC projects in sync with JCPC priorities. Ziomek notes that many projects would come to JCPC if CPAC funding wasn't available. Recreation requests will mean require greater coordination between the two committees.

In discussion of the CPAC requests:

Dog park counts as passive recreation, been funded in other communities.

Epstein purchase entails 30 acres.

Conservation due diligence – how much can be covered by the project? DZ notes that due diligence funds may be covered in the development costs, depends on the situation.

Community connections – committee struggled with this but it is affordable housing but not associated services.

Repeat requests – McGinnis questions if CPAC has looked hard at using the funds as annual operating expenses. It depends on the project and the value seen by the committee. There is no transitional housing in Amherst, committee and staff do not want to see this as a long term funding source. Valley CDC and others are looking at developing housing options.

North Amherst library – there is funding for redesign and the project's been bid out. The request is made because it is CPAC eligible. Ely wonders how accessibility will be achieved for \$45,000 without other modifications to the building. Sentiment is that the request is premature.

First time homebuyers: examples offered as to split between the ownership of property versus ownership of the dwelling. The request assumes a full cost lot purchase.

Farm house preservation – the North Amherst Community Farm, non-profit organization, owns the property.

Municipal trust: consulting support (continuation of current efforts) plus funds to capitalize their account.

Sean Hannon, Director, Information Technology

Infrastructure Replacements – repetitive projects, equipment needs, combined under this category: 75 computers, 1 server, storage area network with support, 10 wireless access points. No copier requests this year to reduce the cost of the request. Lefebvre asks about the lack of copiers, told that the town can go another year without replacement. Will need to replace some wiring as well. Wireless access points are internal, external access points costs are being worked on, may be included in replacement cycle in the future.

Permitting system: allow for an online applications of permits. Noted there is an appropriation from a previous year, this is third iteration of permitting systems for the town. Pulling together a committee to review software.

Firewall replacement – Lefebvre noted that this was not anticipated last year. There was hope the firewall would last longer, should be replaced at five year intervals, move to replacement request.

Police Department recording system – for booking and interview rooms. Proposed system matches what's in the vehicles now, integrates with that, reduces training requirements, and reduces errors.

Licenses – brings same software to everyone's desktop, replacing mix of program.

FY '20 requests are up significantly, results of requests being pushed off and the fiber optic I-net installation. Contract with Comcast allowed for an extra year.

Other business

Schedule: next meeting is February 15, none scheduled for February 22nd.

Steinberg moves to adjourn, seconded by Nakajima. Motion carries unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Bernie Kubiak, Clerk Pro Tem

Documents referred to

Capital requests from the Planning, Assessor, and Information Technology Departments

Listing of proposals to be considered by the Community Preservation